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ABSTRACT

One of 52 theoretical papers on school crime and its relation to poverty, this chapter attempts to demonstrate that deviant behaviors in school are caused and patterned by the manner in which schools differentially constrain the ability of students legitimately to attain the goal of academic success. By applying a modified and extended version of Merton's model of deviance to an assessment of the available research on student deviancy, the authors show that the occurrence of deviance among students, in both overall rates and types of deviant responses made, is socially patterned within the social system of the school, reflecting the socioeconomic status, racial, and sexual attributes of the student body. (Author/MLF)

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THE SOCIAL PATTERNING OF DEVIANT BEHAVIORS IN SCHOOL*

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to demonstrate that deviant behaviors in school are caused and patterned by the manner in which schools differentially constrain the ability of students legitimately to attain the goal of academic success. By applying a modified and extended version of Merton's model of deviance to an assessment of the available research on student deviancy, we have been able to show that the occurrence of deviance among students, in both overall rates and types of deviant responses made, is socially patterned within the social system of the school, reflecting the SES, racial, and sexual attributes of the student body. While it is apparent that low-SES persons and males are more likely to be deviant generally and to engage in criminal and/or rebellious behaviors in particular, there are other, less overt, forms of deviancy (e.g., innovation, retreatism, and ritualism) which are frequently engaged in by other members of the student body. Though such responses may be less noticeable than the more disruptive forms of deviancy, they are equally, if not more, dysfunctional for the continued effectiveness of the school as an educational institution. Policies to reduce student deviancy which are insensitive to the variety and social patterning of deviant student behaviors (i.e., which look only at criminal behaviors) are likely to be both narrow in scope and socially selective, if not discriminatory, in impact. More important, such policies are unlikely to reduce significantly the overall occurrence of student deviancy within schools. Though they may, in the short run, reduce criminal and/or rebellious behaviors, they may encourage, in the long run, other forms of deviancy.

Introduction

Increasing concern is being expressed over what is seen as a rising tide of criminal behavior in schools. Reports of vandalism and interpersonal violence and estimates of the resulting cost to schools have become both more frequent and more sensational to the point that the phenomenon has achieved the status of a "social problem ("Violence in Evanston," 1972; "Crime in Our Schools," 1975; "Violence in Schools," 1975; "Terror in the Schools," 1975)."[1] In response, a number of committees, Congressional hearings, and scholarly conferences have been convened to address this social problem, and it is drawing the heightened attention of social scientists, educators, and policy planners. We can reasonably expect a flood of recommendations from various sectors and groups on what schools should do to curb criminal behavior. The

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[1]One word of caution regarding crime statistics--the data on which claims are made that there is a "crime wave" in our schools--is perhaps in order. It is important to realize that crime statistics have often been judged to be a poor indicator of the actual rate of deviance in a given social setting. As a number of theorists, particularly those of the "labeling theory" school of deviance, have noted, because crime rate statistics are based on the number of criminals caught, they are often a more accurate measure of the behavior of the agents of social control than of the criminals. For example, an increase in the crime rate may result not from the fact that more crimes are being committed but because the police have begun to do a better job and are arresting more people (See Becker, 1963; Bell, 1962, pp. 151-174; Kitsuse & Cicourel, 1963).

situation is not without historical precedent.

It is doubtful, however, whether these forthcoming recommendations will have much impact upon overall rates of deviant behavior among students. Criminal behavior is only one of the more overt forms of deviant behavior labeled and recorded by the schools. Distinctions must be made between those manifest behaviors considered to be criminal and those less overt forms of behavior which are equally deviant in the sociological sense but less frequently labeled as such. Though those latter behaviors are less noticeable, they are potentially just as destructive of the goals of the school and thus are equally deserving of our concern.

Criminal behavior is the easiest to define. It is behavior that violates the law. Homicide, rape, and burglary are obvious examples. Deviant behavior, on the other hand, can be more subtle in nature. In colloquial usage we interpret an action as deviant if it violates an accepted social norm or rule of a group or society. The term "norm" is a sociological designation referring to all products of group interaction which regulate members' behavior in terms of expected or even ideal behavior. A norm denotes not only expected behavior but a range of tolerable behaviors, the limits

of which define deviant acts (Sherif, 1954). Four conditions must be met for an act to be labeled deviant. These are (1) the existence of a norm or rule, (2) the occurrence of an act referred to here as a rule-breaking act (deviance in the structural sense), (3) the interpretation of that act as deviant (e.g., criminal), and (4) the application of sanctions against the author of the act. As Erickson (1963) points out, "Deviance is not something inherent in certain behavioral acts. It is a property conferred upon specific acts by the audiences (interpreters) which directly or indirectly witness them" (p. 6).

In this sense, though all criminal acts may be considered deviant, not all acts deviant in the structural sense (rule-breaking) may be considered criminal. Furthermore, not all persons who break rules or norms will be equally likely to be labeled as deviant (criminal). The labeling of acts as deviant depends both on the nature of the act and on the attributes and interests of the actors and audiences involved. In this instance, overt forms of deviancy (e.g., rebellious behaviors) are more likely to be labeled as deviant than covert or les overt forms of deviant behaviors (e.g., ritualism). Recommendations

which concentrate on criminal behaviors alone are likely to miss completely other forms of deviant behavior which may have consequences as serious in the long run for the continued functioning of schools as do the more widely publicized violent activities. Studies of criminal behavior among students which ignore this fact and fail to place such behaviors within the wider context of deviant behaviors run the risk not only of vastly underestimating the extent of deviant behavior in schools but also, and more importantly, of seriously misinterpreting the causal roots of such behaviors.

The present essay attempts not only to describe these differing deviant behaviors and the place of criminal behavior therein, but also to explain both the sources of their occurrence and their social patterning among students in the school. We will be asking two questions: (1) what gives rise to deviant behavior, and (2) what factors explain which types of deviant behavior are adopted by differing types of students? In so doing we will attempt to isolate those structural characteristics of schools which may themselves be instrumental in the occurrence of deviant behavior. The authors suggest that such deviant behaviors, criminal

and noncriminal, are in large measure a reflection of perhaps unavoidable tensions existing in schools (and in society generally) which result from the goals espoused in schools and from the limited means available to individuals for the attainment of those goals.

In the sections that follow, our attention will first focus upon the delineation of a theoretical model of deviant behavior in schools which draws from the work of Robert K. Merton (Merton, 1938, 1959, 1964, 1968a, 1968b; see also Cole & Zuckerman, 1964; Cole, 1975).[2] The model developed here will attempt to pinpoint the causal roots both of the overall rate of deviant behaviors and of the social patterning of these behaviors in the social system of the school. We will then turn to a synthesis of the existing extensive research in the field as a means of specifying the set of factors that goes into the determination of which

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[2]It must be emphasized here that Merton's model is only one of several competing approaches in the field of deviance, and that it has been the source of much debate. Our efforts do not rest on the claim that Merton's model is completely adequate (is any social science theory?) or the only framework capable of providing insights into why deviance occurs. Instead, our endeavor is an attempt to assess the relevance that one prominent theoretical scheme, Merton's model, can have in the explanation of the phenomenon of school (elementary and especially secondary school) deviance.

types of deviant responses, if any, individuals make in school situations. In particular, we will seek to draw out of the literature some general propositions concerning the distribution of deviant role behaviors in school among different social groups, especially those defined by sex, race, and social class characteristics. Finally, we will use these data to offer some policy recommendations directed toward the reduction not only of criminal student behavior but of other forms of deviant behavior as well.

Merton's Model of Deviance

Merton has argued that deviant behavior can be seen as an individual's response to the disjunction between valued goals and the legitimate means available to achieve these goals. The basic premise of his argument is that when people are socialized to hold a given cultural goal but are deprived, for whatever reasons, of access to legitimate means to attain that goal, there will be a structurally induced pressure of the individual to engage in nonconforming behavior (i.e., deviant behavior).[3] The intensity of pressure will vary according to the degree to which the goal is held and the extent to which means are unavailable. Applying

this scheme to United States society, Merton contended that widespread socialization into the goal of economic success and the presence of restricted economic opportunity combine in a significant segment of the population to produce pressures to deviate from accepted patterns of behavior.

He further suggested that an actor confronted with a disjunction between a valued goal and the available legitimate means for the attainment of that goal would make one of five possible "adaptations," four of which constitute deviant responses.[3] For a number of persons, probably a significant majority, the response would be to take on a conforming role behavior. Given the existence of other norms, most persons would continue to ascribe to the valued goal and legitimate means despite the pressure to deviate. For others, a variety of nonconformist responses are possible, namely (1) innovation--the continued ascribing to the goal, the rejection of legitimate means, and the seeking out of illegitimate

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[3] It should be underscored that for Merton these five adaptations "refer to role behavior in specific types of situations, not to personality. They are types of more or less enduring response, not types of personality organization" (1968a, p. 194). Additionally, "deviance" as viewed by Merton and as used in this paper is any departure from the institutionalized expectations, i.e., norms, of a given social system or setting.

means and/or the creation of new means which may become legitimate in the future; (2) ritualism--the rejection of the goal with the continued ascription to the legitimate means of goal attainment (i.e., going through the steps); (3) retreatism--the rejection of both goals and means which results in the person's withdrawal from the situation; and (4) rebellion--the rejection of both goals and legitimate means which gives rise to the creation of opposing goals and means.[4]

We propose that similar conditions hold in schools. Specifically, we suggest that there exists in the very fabric of schooling in America a structurally induced disjunction between the widely held goal of academic success and the culturally constrained legitimate means available in schools for the attainment of that goal. We further suggest that there exists in school situations enough data on the patterns of deviant behaviors to support the notion that there are educational behavioral parallels to Merton's categories of retreatist,

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[4]As we shall note in greater detail at a later point, one weakness in Merton's discussion of types of adaptations is that he failed systematically to explore the conditions under which any one adaptation will transpire. This we will attempt to do. Several theorists have argued that Merton's typology of adaptations can fruitfully be expanded (Dubin, 1959; Harary, 1966; Parsons, 1951, pp. 256-267). We have decided not to utilize these typological extensions because we did not believe, in light of the limited scope of the current undertaking, that the complexity they introduce outweighed the debatable theoretical advantage they offer.

ritualistic, innovative, and rebellious behavior.

It is important to note at this point that our use of Merton's model of deviancy should not be taken as a denial of the possibility that deviant behavior in schools may arise from sources other than means/goals disjunctions. Obviously, some rebellious behaviors (e.g., riots, vandalism, drug use) may arise primarily out of alternative etiological sources. It is clear that there are a number of nonconforming student cultures in schools as well as a number of persons who by most definitions would be considered psychologically unstable. Rather, Merton's model is employed here to suggest that much, if not a great deal, of deviant behavior in schools is the result of structurally induced disjunctions between the commonly held goal of educational success and the legitimate means available to students to attain that goal.

Although Merton's model has been shown to be useful in describing deviant behaviors, it does not enable the observer to explain and predict the types of deviant role behaviors, if any, differing individuals will take on in response to means/goals disjunctions. What is required are sets of intervening variables which specify the conditions and situations in which differing persons will be likely to take on particular types of deviant

behaviors. With regard to the school we need to look to such factors as the social structural constraints (formal organizational and informal social systems) which influence the distribution of legitimate and illegitimate opportunities for academic success in the school. We also need attend to the character of student/teacher and student/student interactions (both manifest and symbolic) which affect the meanings people attach to academic goals and their perceptions of the opportunity structure of the school that underlies their utilization of available opportunities.

For example, the concept of deviant role behavior is, in this sense, central to understanding the situational nature of deviance. At any time behavior which may be viewed as deviant for the student, as student, in the formal organization of the school may simultaneously be considered as conformist by the student's peers in the informal social system of the school. A student caught cheating, for instance, will undoubtedly be viewed as violating the normative expectations of the student role held by the school. At the same time, his peers may perceive the very same behavior as appropriate to the student role, as they define it, and reinforce that behavior believing that

"everyone cheats." In a similar fashion the notion of role adaptation is also useful in clarifying both the situational- and time-dependent character of deviant role behavior. To be brief, deviant role responses may be seen as situational adaptations by individuals to specific means/goals disjunctions which occur at various times during the school year. Most students are probably deviant at one time or another in their school careers. Many do not, however, remain deviant, but return to conformist behaviors once specific goals are achieved. Whether individuals continue to deviate and/or take on other forms of deviant role behaviors is very much a function of the social context within which those behaviors occur.

In the remainder of this paper we will attempt to delineate these conditions as they apply to the social patterning of different deviant behaviors in schools. The discussion which follows will center about the different types of deviant role adaptations and about those social factors which appear to influence the adaptation of particular modes of deviant role behavior. In the process we will attempt to formulate a longitudinal quasipath model of deviant careers which argues that deviant behavioral histories are often sequencial in

nature, with individuals attempting a variety of deviant responses when earlier efforts fail to achieve desired goals. We hope that such models will better highlight the situational- and time-variant character of student deviancy and lead to the development of more effective policies for their reduction and/or prevention.

Sources of Deviancy in Schools

Before we can formulate a model of student deviancy in schools, we must show that a significant proportion of students do indeed ascribe to the goal of academic success. We must also demonstrate that the differential distribution of legitimate means of goal attainment in schools gives rise to differentially distributed pressure to deviate from accepted patterns of academic behavior.

The Academic Success Goal, Legitimate Means, and Deviant Behavior

It is evident from a range of studies that the goal of academic success is widely held among students in schools, Coleman's (1961) research notwithstanding. Studies by Hill (1951), Holloway and Berreman (1959), and Reiss and Rhodes (1959), and data drawn from Project SCOPE (Boocock, 1972), reveal that from 66 percent to

79 percent of students surveyed believe that getting good grades is "very important" to future success. A recent survey of studies of educational aspirations and plans of high school students indicates that over half of them express a strong desire to go on to college, a figure that is undoubtedly increasing as college attendance becomes a requirement for entry into the middle class.[5] Insofar as grades are a critical criterion for college entry, getting good grades is an important goal of a majority of high school students.

Assuming for the moment that the goal of academic success is not only widespread among the student population but is also uniformly distributed among different types of students, the question remains: are the legitimate means for the attainment of that goal uniformly available to all aspirants? The answer is clearly negative, if only because the very functioning of the school dictates that some people make it and others do not. As a number of commentators have noted,

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[5]The list of relevant works is too long to note here. For a complete listing see F. Cullen and V. Tinto, Deviancy in the Classroom: A Mertonian Analysis of Student Behavior, a paper presented at the 1975 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., from which the current work is partially drawn.

one of the primary functions of the school is that of separating the able from the unable (Havighurst & Neugarten, 1967; Heyns, 1974). It should be noted that screening in this manner is seen by most persons as a legitimate function of the school, and one which should not, in itself, call for deviant responses. Indeed, on a strictly meritocratic level, the school is ideally programmed to deny academic success to a segment of the student body, presumably those in the school population who are of lower learning ability.

But we know that measured ability is not entirely objective, nor is it the only predictor of academic success in schools. Both within and between schools, it is clear that social status origins, home environments, community characteristics, sex, and race, among other factors, are independent predictors of the likelihood that persons of similarly tested abilities will be equally successful in school (Boocock, 1972). Thus, although no exact figures are available, it seems reasonable to contend that the combination of meritocratic and ascriptive forces constrain a significant number of students from "winning" in the academic contest.

Given that these conditions exist, i.e., that a large proportion of students hold the academic success

goal and that a portion of those students are blocked from achieving that goal, the logic of Merton's model leads us to suggest that the interaction of these two conditions —the "means/goal disjunction"—is a major source of deviancy in schools. This would appear to be well established in light of the observations of a number of educational commentators documenting the relation of academic failure to school deviance (Felhusen, Thurston, & Benning, 1970, 1973; Hangstrom & Gardner, 1969; Heath, 1970; Jablonsky, 1970; Thurston, 1964; Watternberg, 1967) and of the empirical studies of Elder (1971) and Hill (1951).

The Distribution of Pressures and Deviant Behavior

To the degree that the disjunction of means and goals does lead to pressures to adopt deviant role behaviors in school, the interaction between the distribution among students of the goal and the distribution among them of legitimate means to achieve that goal will yield pressures to deviate which are themselves distributed in specific ways. We would expect that those attributes of individuals found to be associated with low likelihood of social success both in society and in school would also be associated with the degree to which individuals in school experience pressures to deviate from accepted

patterns of academic behavior appropriate for academic attainment.[6]

Limiting our focus to thos attributes found to be most closely linked to success in school, namely social status, race, and sex, we find that they are also associated with the distribution of pressures to daviate.[7] Regarding the more general of these, social status, the picture is not at first clear because status is positively related both to ascription to the goal of academic success[8] and to access to legitimate

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[6]It should be noted that failure to attain the goal of academic success has been posited to be a source of deviance not only within the school but outside as well. See Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen,. 1955; Palmore & Hammond, 1964; Silberberg & Silberberg, 1971.

[7]We have chosen to employ status characteristics as the central variables of our analysis for two reasons. First, they have traditionally been the dimensions along which work in the field of deviance, particularly that utilizing Merton's model, has proceeded; second, our endeavor is one of social structural investigation, and status position is the basic unit of analysis for this mode of sociological theorizing. It should also be mentioned that, due to the lack of data, our study has been limited almost totally to the consideration of the effects of one status at a time. That is to say, the consequences of possessing a particular combination of statuses (or "status-set") have not been examined.

[8]Again, the list of relevant works is too long to note here. For a complete listing of those items see Cullen & Tinto (1975).

opportunities for goal attainment (Boocock, 1972; Bowles, 1972; Heyns, 1974; Rist, 1970). Thus, while more students of high socioeconomic status may desire educational success, more may also possess the opportunity to be successful; conversely, while fewer youths of low status may hold the success goal, those that do are less likely to have the opportunity to obtain it.

Although we do not possess information on the exact numbers of pupils within each group who hold the success goal but who do not have access to the opportunity structure legitimately to attain those goals, it is possible to gain a rough estimate by utilizing an indirect measure of means/goals disjunction employed by Spergel (1974), Short and Strodtbeck (1965), and Della Fave (1974). Della Fave found that the likelihood of experiencing a gap between aspirations and expectations was inversely related to SES among high school students. Indeed, a reanalysis of his table (see Della Fave 1974, p. 160) revealed the following differences between the percentage of those aspiring to four years or more of college but unlikely to achieve that goal for each socioeconomic group: 1 (highest SES) = 3.8%; 2 = 8.3%; 3 = 15.6%; 4 = 27.6%; 5 (lowest SES) = 26.6%. Based on these data, then, we

would submit that means/goal disjunctions and the pressure to deviate are more prevalent among low-SES students.

Moving on to the status characteristic of sex, data from SCOPE reveal that the importance of earning "good grades" is similar for girls and boys (Boocock, 1972). Indeed, research on aspirations supports the premise that there may be even more boys than girls committed to the goal of educational success.[9] However, as an extensive review of the literature by Boocock (1972) suggests, when it comes to actually attaining academic success, boys fall far short of girls on both the elementary and high school levels. This latter finding indicates that boys, perhaps due to such factors as maturational differences, sex-role expectations, and personality characteristics, do not have equal access to the goal they pursue. Following the logic of Merton's model then, we would propose that, as a result of similar commitment to educational success in the face of differential opportunity, a greater proportion of boys experience pressure to deviate than

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[9]Again the list of relevant works is too long to note here. For a complete listing of those items see Cullen and Tinto (1975).

do their female classmates.

Regarding race, the data appear to be consistent in suggesting that a greater proportion of Blacks experience pressure to deviate in school than do whites (Elder, 1970, 1971). Blacks in school have been found, contrary to public stereotype, more often to ascribe to the goal of academic succes than whites (Boyd, 1952; Brown, 1965; Gist & Bennett, 1963; Phillips, 1972; Reiss & Rhodes, 1959), while also experiencing a relative deprivation of opportunity to achieve that goal (Boocock, 1972). But, though this appears to be true for Blacks as a group, it is as yet unclear how race, sex, and social status interact in the specification of pressures to deviate. Since Blacks tend to be overrepresented in the lower social status of society, and since lower status persons tend to experience greater pressures to deviate, it is unclear to what degree being Black is independently related to means/goals disjunction.

Thus far, an effort has been made to show that pressure to deviate is differentially distributed among various groups within the school. It has been argued that a means/goal disjunction and the pressure it generates is more prevalent among Blacks than among

whites, more prevalent among low-SES students than among high-SES students, and more prevalent among boys than among girls. Our survey of the literature on such topics as attendance, cheating, classroom behavior problems, dropping out, labeling, school-related alienation, and student rebellion has revealed that, with few exceptions, the occurrence of deviant behavior has in fact been found to be proportionately greater among Blacks, among low-SES students, and among boys (Elder, 1970, 1971; Heussenstamm & Hoepfner, 1971; NEA, 1963; Ptaschnick, 1973; Silverman & Blount, 1970; Varner, 1967; Worcester & Ashbaugh, 1972; Backman, 1972; Clarkson & Hayden, 1972; Cloward & Jones, 1962; Curley, Griffin, Sawyer, & Savitsky, 1971; Dentler, 1964; Glidewell, 1961; Hill, 1951; Jablonsky, 1970; Leveque & Walker, 1970; Mullin, 1955; Thurston, 1964; Watternberg, 1967; Balow, 1966; Hangstrom & Gardner, 1969; Rouman, 1956; Schab, 1969; Zeitlin, 1957). It is noteworthy, in this respect, that a recent study of deviancy within schools (Bachman, Green, & Wirtanen, 1971) reveals that overall rates of deviancy decline markedly after school leaving (graduation or otherwise). This suggests the notion being argued here, that much of the observable deviancy among

individuals in school is specific to the context of the school and not necessarily a direct reflection of the norms and/or interests which the individuals bring with them into the school.

Innovative Behavior in School

Faced with a disjunction between a valued goal and the availability of legitimate means, most persons attempt first to adopt an innovative response. What this means is that, given the choice, most persons will first try to attain the desired goal through alternative, illegitimate means that are equally functional for the attainment of that goal. Only after failing in this attempt or being totally precluded from the use of innovative behavior will most people resort to other forms of deviancy (Cloward, 1959; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Cohen, 1966).[10]

Cheating, purchasing term papers, "brown-nosing," as well as more creative responses to traditional problems, are some forms of behavior falling under the rubric of innovation. Such behaviors are deviant

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[10]We would like to thank Richard A. Cloward for personally impressing the importance of this point upon one of the authors.

for two reasons: (1) they may challenge traditional practices in education, and (2) they undermine the moral force of the formal organization and the means to achievement it designates as legitimate.

But neither creativity nor the availability of illegitimate means are distributed at random in the social system of the school. The distribution of illegitimate means appears to be very much controlled by the nature of the informal social system that pervades the organization of the school, both among the various student subcultures and among and between the various interactive cultures of students, teachers, and administrators. Access to these illegitimate means depends then, not only on the student's position within the social system of his peers, but also upon his or her ability to develop affective relationships with various representatives of the formal organization of the school, especially the classroom teacher. As we know from past research, an individual's ability to make those personal teacher/student relationships is a function of a number of variables which include sex, race, social status, physical attractiveness (especially for females) and behavioral styles (Rist, 1970; Clifford & Walster, 1973).

Given these findings, it is not surprising that we find that innovative deviant behavior is more likely to occur among whites than among Blacks, more likely among males than among females, and more likely among students with higher social status backgrounds than among those with lower status origins (Kingsley & Gentry, 1961; Hill, 1951). It is of value to note what may appear obvious, that, among the various forms of deviance which may occur in schools, innovative responses most probably enable the individual to achieve the valued goal. The other forms of deviance, to be discussed shortly, are either failure modes or those in which goal attainment is highly unlikely.

Ritualism in School

When no alternative means exist for the attainment of the valued goal, several other forms of deviant behavior are possible. The least noticeable to the outside observer is ritualistic behavior, namely, the giving up of the goal of academic success while maintaining, publicly, behaviors appropriate to that goal. "Going through the motions" may best describe this process. Its attractiveness as a mode of adaptation lies largely in the fact that it is mainly internal

in its manifestations and thus does not elicit negative sanctions.[11] It spares the person the pain of being labeled a failure in school in any direct sense, thus helping offset the possible recriminations of family and peers. The individual adopting this mode can always claim he "tried."

Given that ritualistic behaviors are largely internal in nature, it is not surprising that such responses are rarely considered as deviant behaviors by the school. From the school's point of view, these responses are perhaps the least objectionable; they result in little if any overt conflict in the classroom and/or in any direct or indirect threat to the value structure of the school. While ensuring the maintenance of attendance figures (and therefore funds from the

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[11] Merton in his expanded version of "Social Structure and Anomie," has effectively stated the essence of our argument in the following passage:

> It is something of a terminological quibble to ask whether this (ritualism) represents genuinely deviant behavior. Since the adaptation is, in effect, an internal decision and since the overt behavior is institutionally permitted though not culturally preferred, it is not generally considered to represent a social problem. Whether or not this is described as deviant behavior, it clearly represents a departure from the cultural model in which m ı are obliged to strive actively, preferably through institutionalized procedures, to move onward and upward in the social hierarchy. (1968, p. 204)

state), ritualistic behaviors may also act to reduce the overall workload of teachers in classrooms. It is not altogether impossible that teachers and/or school officials may actively encourage ritualistic responses among selected groups of students experiencing means/goal disjunctions as a means of dealing with potentially dangerous, overload situations (Clark, 1960). It should be noted that, though functional in one sense, ritualistic behavior is dysfunctional for the attainment of the goal of effective classroom learning (Jackson, 1968). Ritualistic behavior by a significant number of persons in the classroom is hardly conducive to the overall learning of the whole class. Thus, while teachers may encourage ritualism as a functional response to overload situations, such behaviors may have the unintended consequence of lowering academic standards in the long run.

Past socialization patterns and existing norms of the informal social system of the school both are critical determinants of the patterning of deviant adaptations to disjunctive situations. Females appear much more likely to adopt ritualistic responses than males in similar situations, presumably as a result of specific role socialization experiences and the expectations of significant others. Girls are expected

and encouraged to be comparatively docile and passive within the school, and therefore tend to be somewhat less aggressive and/or assertive than males and to take on ritualistic as opposed to innovative or rebellious responses to pressures to deviate (Boocock, 1972, pp. 94-95). And this is true despite the fact that females exhibit lower overall rates of deviance than do males; when faced with disjunctive situations females are more likely to conform.

Ritualism among females appears to be a function of age and level of schooling as well. Boocock (1972, pp. 88-89), for instance, cites evidence which suggests that ritualistic adaptations among females occur primarily in the later years of high school. Specifically she finds that females generally outperform males in most academic areas during the elementary, junior, and beginning high school years, but that in the last two years of high school the trend is reversed. In those years, when performance becomes most relevant to college acceptance, female performance declines markedly and the performance of males increases noticeable. This suggests not only the possible impact of role expectations held by significant others but also, perhaps more significantly, the expectations females come to hold for their own future performance. Underachievement, a possible

reflection of ritualistic adaptations, may be an aspect of self-fulfilling prophecies in education.

With regard to the attributes of social status and race the literature is unclear. Given differences between overall rates of deviancy among these different groups, it is difficult at the present stage of research to pinpoint which groups, Black or white, high-status or low-status, are more likely to adopt ritualistic responses when deviating. Among those groups, responses appear to be very situationally specific, varying with school, peer-group, and family characteristics. Nevertheless, our impressions are that persons of high or middle social status and white persons may be somewhat more likely to adopt ritualistic responses than are lower status persons and Black individuals. Compared to other modes of response (after innovative adaptations have been attempted), ritualistic adaptations have fewer external manifestations that may have the effect of foreclosing future options for conformist and/or innovative responses, and individuals with a greater stake in the academic process may be more inclined to take on ritualistic responses than retreatist or rebellious ones. On the other hand, adaptation of deviant responses may be constrained by the social structure of the school (teachers, peers, organizational

attributes, and the like), and it may also be that Blacks and/or lower status individuals have fewer opportunities to take on ritualistic responses and may be forced to adopt deviant modes of behavior, retreatist and rebellious, which act to exclude them from future participation in the academic game.

Retreatism in School

Giving up of both goals and means very often leads to retreatist forms of deviant adaptations. Dropping out, truancy, and passivity are all forms of retreatism. In each instance, the individual experiencing pressure to deviate, through the unavailability of both legitimate and illegetimate means, gives up pursuit of the goal and withdraws from the situation. Unlike ritualistic behavior, retreatism is external in character and thus more likely to be noted by school officials, recorded in school records, and studied by social scientists and psychologists interested in student behavior generally and dropout behavior in particular.

The noticeability of retreatist behavior exposes the individual to the potential of recriminating and/or stigmatizing reactions from the audiences of school and family. Yet, as it involves the person taking the "blame"

for failure, it is frequently viewed as part of the normal attrition process. Thus it is likely that retreatism will be adopted when (1) there is little potential recrimination by significant others (i.e., little family or peer pressure for attainment); (2) alternative values held by the individual are inclined toward this behavioral mode (i.e., the counterculture's attitude of turning on and dropping out); and (3) there are significant alternative peer pressures to take on that form of deviant behavior (i.e., deviant subcultures).

Ritualism and retreatism appear to be mirror images of each other, insofar as they both involve relatively submissive forms of deviant adaptations as opposed to aggressive responses (rebellion). In the sequence of deviant role adaptations by students, it is likely that retreatist behaviors may often follow ritualistic responses.

Since the social system of the school is in part responsible for situations which give rise to deviant behaviors, in this instance retreatist behaviors, it would seem also to be related to the patterning of retreatist behaviors among students. A number of persons may be constrained by the formal and informal social systems of the school (especially peers) from adopting alternative responses and find themselves induced (forced)

to withdraw from school situations. In this sense, alienation and voluntarily dropping out may be as much the result of an inability to adopt innovative and/or ritualistic responses as it is of participation in and support from alternative subcultures in and out of the school. Teachers may even encourage students to withdraw from large classrooms when those withdrawals pose no threat to the teachers' position (as they may through the mechanisms of attendance-based funding and teacher evaluation).

Which students are most likely to adopt this type of deviant behavior? The evidence suggests that males may be somewhat more likely than females to adopt retreatist responses. Inc onstrast to males, it would appear that females are subjected to significant social and normative constraints against taking on retreatist behaviors (e.g., it is simply not "proper" for females to retreat in any overt manner). The alternative support mechanisms for females (peer groups in particular) which would offset the social consequences of dropping out have been few.

With respect to social class, no simple relationship is revealed in the literature, though it is our impression that retreatism may be somewhat more likely among lower

social status groups of certain racial and ethnic characteristics than among many higher status groups. Not only are higher status persons less likely to participate in deviant subcultures, but they are also more likely to encounter stiff parental resistance to any activity that would jeopardize their chances to secure an acceptable position in the conventional order.

In relation to race, it would appear that Blacks of lower status are more apt than whites of similar class origins to withdraw from disjunctive situations (Heussenstamm & Hoepfner, 1971; Phillips, 1972; Ptaschnik, 1973; Silverman & Blount, 1970). That lower status Blacks may be somewhat more likely to take on retreatist modes of deviance would appear to be due largely to slightly different value orientations and to less peer-group and family pressure for academic success. Taking our cue from Turner's (1960) description of the interaction between structural and value components of contest and sponsorship systems of mobility within schools, we suggest that without particular value orientations which predispose individuals to rebellious responses (to be discussed briefly) Blacks are more likely to retreat from disjunctive situations. Dropping out, alienation, and social withdrawal are likely to

follow. Critical here is the degree to which Blacks perceive the "contest" system (which favors whites) as being legitimate and the outcomes of that contest system as being largely due to individual shortcomings as opposed to being built into the contest. Elder's (1971) study of the relationship between Black ideology and behavior seems to support this contention. There is evidence that Blacks categorized as integrationists were prone to retreat in the face of disjunctive situations, whereas Blacks categorized as Black nationalists tended toward more aggressive, even rebellious, responses in similar situations. Perceived legitimacy of the "contest" and values regarding interracial relationships appear to be critical factors.

Regarding the prevalance of retreatism among Blacks, one possible factor is that the school constrains the types of adaptation individuals will take. Teachers, administrators, and others may consciously and unconsciously encourage Blacks to adopt retreatist modes of behavior, if only because such responses, though dysfunctional in their consequences, do not disrupt the work of the classroom as do rebellious responses. Indeed, one might argue that overburdened teachers in crowded ghetto schools may actively encourage such behaviors as a means of reducing

their workloads to manageable levels (Rist, 1970).

Rebellion in School

Of all forms of deviant behavior, rebellion is the most obvious and so is considerably more likely to be noted in school records than other forms of student deviancy. Involving as it does the rejection of established goals and means and frequently the attempted substitution of new goals and means, rebellious behavior also poses the most direct threat to the established order of the school. Vandalism, interpersonal violence such as assault, school-directed violence such as violent demonstrations and riots, student strikes, and classroom outbursts against other students and/or teachers are, in varying ways and to varying degrees, threats to the established order of the school, its value system, and its distribution of rewards. They are direct threats to the school because they immediately challenge the prevailing structure of authority and bring into question the legitimacy of school officials to dictate who shall attain what goals. Rebellious behaviors also pose indirect threats to the school insofar as such behaviors have a demoralizing effect upon other members of the social system of the school. Though such effects may occur among both faculty and students,

their impact upon the school may be more severe in the latter instance; rebellion among a few students may lead other students who normally would not have done so, to take on deviant responses to disjunctive situations. The "snowball effect" of student demonstrations is an obvious example of such chain reaction.

Studies show that, next to academic problems, inability to adjust to the behavioral expectations of the school results in more students being referred for psychological evaluation and subsequently being labeled deviant than does anything else (Parmer, 1960; White, 1966). While not all persons labeled by school officials as deviant are in fact rule-breakers, it is also true that not all rule-breakers are so labeled in official records. This gets back to our earlier point that the application of the deviant label is highly situational and contingent upon such attributes as sex, race, and social status. Studies of student deviancy which utilize school records only are therefore likely not only substantially to underestimate the total amount of deviant behavior but also to emphasize rebellious responses rather than other types of deviant adaptations. This implies that such studies will tend to pick out certain members of the student body and not others as being prone toward deviant behaviors.

Given the potentially disruptive consequences of rebellious acts of deviancy, it is not surprising that such behaviors tend to evoke direct and immediate school response aimed at the reestablishment of social control. Whereas other forms of deviancy are often viewed with little alarm (e.g., ritualism and retreatism), if not with some acceptance, rebellious responses by students are generally seen as requiring immediate reaction "lest the situation get completely out of hand." Punitive measures such as immediate or threatened ejection from the school and/or classroom, forced isolation from the larger student body, and the utilization of security forces are not uncommon, especially if rebellion among a large proportion of students seems likely (e.g., in inner-city schools with large minority student populations).

For the immediate participants, especially students, rebellion offers little in the way of positive returns. Given its overt character, rebellion immediately exposes the individual to direct institutional response and may lead to varying forms of punishment and/or to banishment from the classroom and the school. Unless there are alternative channels of attainment, most students face an uncertain employment future without the legitimizing

credentials of the school. And even if the rebellion does not result in banishment or lack of employment, the individual may be haunted by school records which label him or her as a "troublemaker." During the recent student unrest in the universities, it was not uncommon for admission officers to screen out applicants whose past records suggested possible rebellion in the college. But, as noted, not all rule-breakers will be so labeled; rebellion alone is not sufficient cause for being labeled a troublemaker. As research in the labeling theory of deviance has demonstrated, other social and personal attributes come into play in the process of being labeled by school officials.

As with other forms of student deviancy, rebellious behaviors appear to be patterned in the social system of the school and seem to occur more frequently among certain groups and in certain school contexts. Several mediating factors appear to influence who takes on rebellious responses to disjunctive situations, among them (1) the sequence of deviant behaviors; (2) the perceived legitimacy of the existing distribution of means and goals; (3) peer-group orientations; and (4) past history of goal attainment. It is likely that, for a large majority of students, rebellion is the last resort or last phase of deviant histories (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). Failing at all else and being

unwilling or unable to take on retreatist responses, for example, individuals may find themselves moving toward rebellious adaptations as the only remaining mode of expression other than final conformity. For most students, rebellion against school officials and/or expectations entails the rejection of a wider set of values regarding proper behavior in society and therefore is engaged in only after all other forms of adaptation fail. Of course, for a number of students, rebellious responses may be the first and most immediate response to means/goal disjunctions. For these persons, personality attributes, peer-group pressures, and past failures at conforming adaptations appear to be critical.

Not surprisingly, we find that Blacks are more prone to rebellious responses to disjunctive situations than are whites (Phillips,1972; Ptaschnik, 1973; Elden, 1971). Though there are undoubtedly a number of factors which may reverse this trend in particular situations for a limited number of persons, Black students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are considerably more likely to rebel against the school than are whites. Except for a still small, though increasing, number of students, whites are more likely than Blacks to see themselves as having equal opportunity and less likely to be strongly attracted

to such powerful counterideologies as "Black Power." And, as evidence demonstrates, more whites than Blacks believe with good reason that conforming, nonrebellious responses will lead to rewards after schooling is completed.

Many of the preceding comments also apply to the difference between male and female rates of rebellion. Simply put, females are considerably less likely than males to engage in rebellious role behaviors. Central to this is the difference in patterning of socialization among males and females which tends to dictate against aggressive reactions to disjunctive situations by females.

Among students of differing social class backgrounds, differences in rates of rebellious responses are not so clear. Given the interaction between race, academic performance, social class, and school contexts, one would expect lower status persons, especially minorities, to be more likely to take on rebellious adaptations than higher status persons. But lower status persons, especially whites, are less likely to be exposed to radical ideologies. Where such ideologies are most readily available, rates of rebellion may also be high. The determination of such differences is hindered however by the presence of conflicting data (Stinchcombe, 1964) and by the fact that lower status

persons tend to have higher rates of nonconformity for all adaptations. The need for detailed situational participant observation is clear.

Concluding Comments

The present discussion was not intended to be an explanation for all deviant behaviors in school. There are undoubtedly many people whose deviancy lies in the norms and personality attributes developed prior to schooling and whose behaviors are relatively unaffected by the social structure of the school. Nevertheless, we argue that a more thorough understanding of deviant behavior among students requires direct attention to the structural determinants of schooling which influence the attainment of the goal of academic success. In our view the disjunction between the valued goal of academic success and the availability of legitimate means to attain that goal serves as a primary cause of student deviancy. But, as pointed out earlier, the existence of such disjunctive pressures, though necessary, is insufficient to explain both the taking on of nonconformist behaviors and the types of deviant responses so adopted. For that, a number of mediating variables are needed, variables which include school, teacher, and individual characteristics. We argue that knowledge both

of the pressures to deviate and of the structure and process of the social system of the school can, in conjunction, provide significant insight into the patterning of responses that are taken on by differing types of persons in the school.

It has also been suggested that there may be distinct longitudinal sequencing of deviant behaviors; i. e., time-dependent patterns of deviant behaviors which lead individuals from one mode of adaptation to another, depending upon the success in adaptation at each point in the sequence. The sequence of deviant adaptations shown in Figure 1 represents our view of the most common pattern of deviant role adaptations.[12]

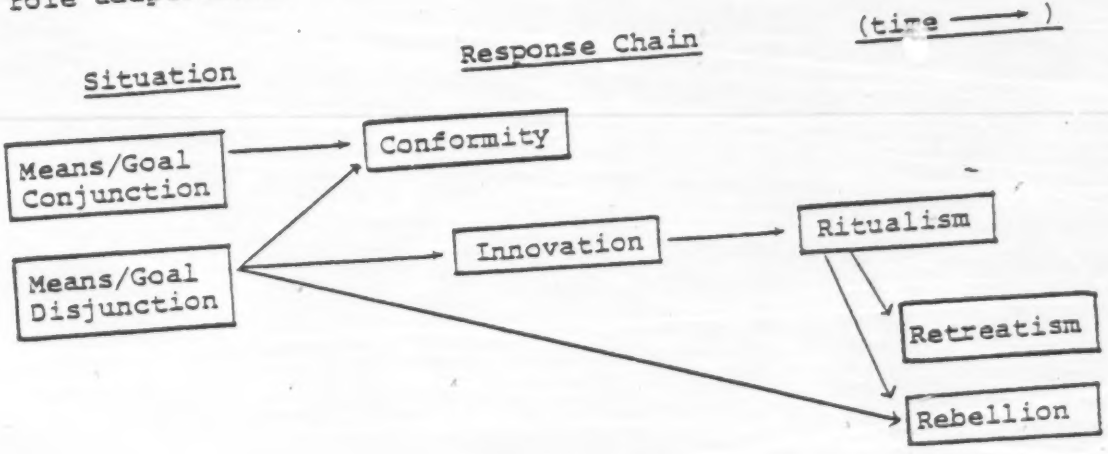

Figure 1. Suggested sequential chain model of deviant role adaptations (only paths of greatest likelihood are shown).

12 The paths, though suggestive, are not to be taken as representing the outcome of longitidinal path analysis, even though such analysis

The main point made by the diagram, beyond that of the sequential nature of deviance, is that most persons socialized into the goals of society would be more inclined first to adopt innovative responses to disjunctive situations and only to adopt other, more "defeating" responses when innovation fails or is not possible. This suggests that the goal of academic success and its sequential counterpart, occupational success, is so strong among the majority of United States youth that continued attempts at goal attainment occur before any diminution of that goal.[13] At the same time, the model recognizes that for some persons, especially those who are not greatly committed to the goal of academic success or who have ascribed to alternative ideologies counter to the values of the school, rebellion and/or retreatism may follow immediately upon means/goals disjunctions.[14]

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12 (cont.)
seems to offer some hope of tracing out such deviant response chains. And the arrows (unattached) to ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion are meant to suggest that some of these behaviors arise from causes other than means/goal disjunction.

13 For some, even failure at innovation may not lead to continued deviancy. Given the strength of other normative orientations, failure at innovation may lead to reconforming behaviors. For those persons, the perceived costs of other forms of deviancy may be too high or may be seen as being in conflict with other held values.

14 Apparent is the need for more detailed research in this

Regarding questions of policy, it should be evident from our analysis that attempts to deal with particular forms of deviancy among students in isolation both from other forms of deviancy and from their root causes will do little to reduce the overall rate of deviancy in schools. Current attempts to restrict and subdue rebellious behavior among students (through the use, for instance, of police in schools) are particularly suspect. Though a number of students will undoubtedly be discouraged from taking on more overt forms of rebellion, and some will be induced to leave the school entirely (that is, take on more extreme forms of retreatism), it is likely that many openly or potentially rebellious students will simple adopt less overt deviant behaviors. While these alternative modes of deviant behaviors may be less noticeable, the long-run consequences for effective schooling may be as severe, if not more so, if only because one of the root causes of deviance, one which is amenable to social action, is left untouched. Moreover, the use of restrictive disciplinary measures, such as police patrols, may actually increase deviancy among students through its impact on the perceived legitimacy of the school and of the values it professes. While police

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14 (cont.)
field. What research exists, and that is very limited, often focuses only on one form of deviancy (most frequently cheating and rebellious behaviors) and usually takes recourse to self-reports (e.g., cheating) and/or school records for their data. But, as we have pointed out, such school records are less than reliable indicators of the actual rates and distribution of deviant behaviors in school.

may protect the safety of teachers, administrators, and students, their presence may lead the great majority of students who would not otherwise become deviant to question the very authority of the school and therefore heighten the likelihood of their taking on deviant behaviors in the future.

Anyone who has ever visted a school patrolled by policemen must have been struck by its stifling atmosphere. One is reminded of other, more obviously custodial institutions -- asylums, prisons, and concentration camps. While the analogy is not perfect in that students may leave the institution at the day's end, and beyond the age of compulsory attendance may leave the school altogether, the atmosphere and setting are unnervingly similar. Most obvious are the locked doors, the sense of entrapment, the air of despair and betrayal, and the almost "Big Brother" mentality. Is it surprising if students exposed to such environments take on the behavioral characteristics appropriate to such settings? Are we not advocating deviant behavior when we treat all students as if they were deviant? A policy intended quickly to reduce overt crime within the school may create less manifest but equally dangerous behavioral adaptations, without in any way addressing the basic causes of deviancy. Perhaps it

would be best for criminal behavior to be treated in the criminal system outside the school.

We believe the root cause for much of the criminal behavior of students lies in the very structure of the United States school. Our schools intentionally seek to limit to a chosen number the fruits of academic success. Whether viewed as a meritocracy or as a stratified system of privilege, the school is designed to screen out those who, for whatever reason, are not deemed suited for higher levels of attainment. Insofar as that attainment is or is perceived to be functionally related to attainment in the wider society, the school unavoidably creates pressures upon individuals to deviate from accepted patterns of behavior. And to the degree that such judgments of acceptability and/or merit are affected by considerations other than merit, the school creates pressures to deviate which are not distributed uniformly among members of the student body. Whetehr this is intentional or not is beside the point; that it is inherent in the structure of the school which thus creates its own deviants is to the point.

What can be done to remedy this situation is, however, no simple matter. The school serves a number of functions (e.g., socialization, screening, selection and differentiation, and training).

Attempts to alter one function, in this case screening, will affect the manner in which the school carries out its other functions. The relative value of these functions and the acceptable balance of these effects (e.g., reduction of screening to reduce deviancy results in a reduction of differentiation) are very much matters of personal judgment. And, though some commentators have spoken of the dis-establishment of the school system, they have rarely suggested alternative structures to carry out the other functions of formal schooling which are needed in our highly differentiated, complex society. Our position is that the dysfunctional consequences of screening upon student behavior are not entirely the result of screening per se, but are, in part, the result of screening which recognizes only a very limited number of achievements. Should schools come to reward equally a greater variety of skills and attainments (skills which cut across both personality and social class distinctions), much will have been done to reduce the frequency of student deviancy in schools. A better school will emerge. At present, however, our schools are in the unhappy position of attempting to control deviant behaviors which they themselves produce and which may be heightened by the very tools used for their control. The Queen of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland would have felt very much at home in the United States school system.

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